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ABSTRACT

Reassessment of conventional development conceptions and practice has raised questions about relevance of education to expanded theories of economic development. Previously accepted concepts of development have focused on increased economic productivity, and have assumed a causal connection between the existence of schools and the pace of development. Formal schooling has had three objectives: modernization, manpower training, and development of a professional class. Emphasis has been on schooling, but not necessarily on education. Formal schools are detached from indigenous practice, may be more suited to teaching than to learning, are limited in learning methods they can employ, and depend largely on deferred rewards; schooling usually precedes employment. Formal schooling increasingly seems unrelated to comprehensive views of development, does not reach people when and where they need it, produces educated unemployed, and is costly. Expanded conceptions of development, with humane rather than technical emphases, have different educational emphases: human need, equity, employment opportunities, low per capita/instructional unit cost, limited duration, and recognition of learner's aspirations. Both formal and non-formal education can contribute. Immediate ways to take action involve: creating comprehensive national education policies; combining formal and non-formal education; working with agencies which sponsor non-formal education programs; and conducting research to strengthen non-formal education programs. (MH)

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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Formal Education, Non-Formal Education, and Expanded Conceptions of Development

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INTRODUCTION

Through its series of Occasional Papers, the NFE Information Center seeks to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among those pioneering in the practice of non-formal education. In dynamic, relatively young fields of inquiry and experimentation it is especially important to bring budding "ideas in progress" to the light of public scrutiny. We intend the papers in this series to provoke critical discussion and to contribute to the generation of knowledge about non-formal education.

In this paper, Cole Brembeck brings to his reflections both wisdom and a wealth of experience in educational planning. He views education as a whole system, various components of which function structurally to do different things. The structural characteristics of formal education and those of non-formal education are examined in terms of functional congruence with development goals. Finally, Dr. Brembeck suggests specific actions which can be taken to better mobilize educational resources to serve expanded conceptions of development.

We invite your participation in this dialogue and welcome your comments.

Joan M. Claffey
Director
Non-Formal Education Information Center

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Formal Education, Non-Formal Education, and Expanded Conceptions of Development

Cole S. Brembeck

Much current discussion about development centers upon reformulations of conventional development conceptions, theory, and practice. Concepts that went unexamined during the last 25 years are now subject to scrutiny and reassessment. Indeed, a reconstruction of the very idea of development is underway. What its final outcome will be is difficult to predict. The reordering of development values has proceeded sufficiently far, however, to warrant asking a basic question: *How relevant is education to the newer and expanded conceptions of development?*

In this paper, I will raise some questions about the adequacy of conventional modes of education for meeting the emerging demands of development. To get at this issue, I will first compare and contrast the education correlates of the older and newer conceptions of development. Then I will suggest some reordering of educational thought in order to bring it into finer tune with current development goals. Finally, I will attempt to draw some implications for policy and practice.

Commonplace Conceptions of Development

Perhaps it would be helpful to begin by highlighting trends in the current reformulation and expansion of conceptions of development, as a basis for looking at their respective educational correlates. These trends are widely enough known that a detailed treatment is not necessary here.

The development concept that has been pervasive since the 1950's has

had as its central mechanism increased economic productivity, usually summarized in the concept of Gross National Product (GNP): the total value of all final products, including consumption goods, net exports, private investments, and government purchases. Development policy originally was derived from and defined by the objective of increased GNP. Development programs have been evaluated by their contributions to this goal.

The GNP idea is based upon a particular set of assumptions about a broad range of economic, political, and humanitarian ideals. For example, one assumption is that from increased GNP flows a whole array of developmental accomplishments, one of which is expanded employment which, in turn, will lead to increased distribution of wealth. Another assumption is that from expanded employment and the increased distribution of wealth will flow greater political and social benefits. The over-arching assumption is that economic growth is an adequate outcome of the process of comprehensive development.

Education Correlates to Economic Growth

There has been a systematic development of institutions designed to perform and administer the organizational functions of an expanding economy. Corporations, lending agencies, and state ministries all have played important roles. Then there is education.

How have educational institutions supported the expanding economy concept of development? In many countries, there is an impressive dependence on schooling, along with extensive and elaborate systems of education which is vested most visibly in formal, state-sponsored schools. Conventional wisdom dictates that there is a causal connection between the existence of schools and the pace of development. Throughout the developing world, this largely unexamined belief is tremendously strong and pervasive. Schooling is inexorably linked to the economic growth process, but the emphasis is on schooling, not necessarily on education, as it is broadly conceived.

Exactly how state supported schools perform development functions rarely has been seriously considered. At the same time, there has been little study of what, precisely, schools actually contribute to development. The unquestioned allocation of development-related educational functions to schools probably is the result of many forces. Certainly one such force is the fact that school people are involved in educational planning; allocation of educational functions to formal schooling, therefore, is one of the easier solutions. Some educational efforts, of course, have taken other forms, particularly programs in health education, nutrition education, population control, and agricultural extension. In general, however, these kinds of programs primarily seek to establish certain minimum requisite conditions for health or nutrition or population control, without which it is simply impossible to work toward economic growth. It is the formal school, on the other hand, that has been placed squarely within the institution-building efforts. The reasoning is that the concept of development calls for an "educational system", a system of institutions called schools.

The Structural Properties of Schools

All learning environments possess certain structural properties which set limits on their capacities to perform educational functions. Thus, some learning environments are naturally better at doing some things than are others. What are the structural properties of formal schools which condition their capacities to perform development tasks?

1. Formal schools are institutions detached from indigenous practice. When the first schools sprang up around native artisans, they separated youth from their families for periods of time and made "students" of them. Over time, schools became institutions for learning; teaching became a profession and learning became a recognized pursuit of the young. Thus, schools in a sense were broken off from the main stream of work and action.

This separation of learning from action has a deep psychological impact

upon the learner. A student progresses through formal education knowing that what is being learned is to some extent removed from the everyday reality of adult society. It is "academic". This awareness is revealed in many ways. The common urge of students to get *out* of school, for example, expresses a great deal about the meaning students attach to being *in* school. Education, in being considered as preparation for the real world, tends to be denied a reality of its own. The frequently expressed demands that schooling be more relevant implies that it is not. If lack of relevancy exists, it is a characteristic that modifies and shapes the capacity of formal education to perform development tasks. When schools are primarily a natural environment for teaching things not directly related to indigenous practice, they are an unnatural environment for teaching indigenous practice itself.

2. Schooling, in the normal scheme of things, precedes employment. The learning experience is *preparatory*, tending to place students in holding patterns prior to joining the main stream. Other arrangements are possible, of course. Schooling may run *concurrently* with its use, as in some types of internship. Or, it may *follow* work, as in the Chinese system in which workers recommend their peers for further study opportunities. These three quite different environments may produce quite different educational outcomes. In the pre-employment model, the outcomes by their nature often relate more to schooling itself than to employment.

3. The apparatus of schools is admirably suited to *teaching*; whether the same may be said for *learning* is debatable. Children in preliterate societies, many anthropologists observe, usually are far more eager to learn than the elders are to teach, while in machine cultures children are less eager to learn and adults more eager to teach. These situations may be attributed simply to the nature of the different societies or to more complex factors. The enigma, however, does raise some interesting questions. Part of the reason for the differences may lie in the difference in modes of learning between preliterate and literate societies. They often make quite different use of formal and non-formal learning. Can it be that in

substituting the discipline of the classroom and the material rewards of grades for the often more pleasurable system of participating in adult-valued behavior, we offend the basic social and biological nature of the young? Can it be that in spending the great resources we do on improving the arts of teaching, we have actually failed to create stimulating environments of learning?

4. Formal schools depend to a large extent on deferred rewards. The immediate present is devalued. Only the future is truly meaningful. Formal education, then, has to find its target point in future time. In doing this, it teaches students to deny the present for the sake of later rewards, admission to the next level of education, a job, and eventual "success". By nature, formal education does not seem to carry within it satisfactions sufficient for both the present and the future.

5. Formal schools are limited in the methods of learning which they are able to employ. Consider, first, that since schools operate outside the context of immediate action, they must depend more on telling than in doing. In the community, students learn from observation and action; in a formal school, they learn largely by being told. In the community, they are active; in school, they are passive. Second, as knowledge increases, more and more time must be given over to telling, either orally or in print, or in demonstrating outside the context of action. Third, the student must learn to follow the lesson through abstract written or oral language. This requires special skills that must be learned if a student is to achieve satisfactorily in school. Finally, because it requires special skills, school learning becomes an art in itself, largely removed from reality for its own sake.

Schools and Economic Growth

Overall, how do schools serve economic growth? There are at least three ways. The first has to do with modernization. Modernization, the argument runs, requires a reshaping of attitudes and values. Societies are poor in the first place because they are traditional; they have not

learned economic attitudes which make for increased agricultural production and rapid industrialization. Thus, modernization calls for changes in learning style, the uses of time, perceptions of the social context in the natural world, notions about progress, mobility, internalized reward structures, and achievement motivation. These tasks are the business of the schools. That's why primary schools concentrate especially on literacy, numeracy, and informational learning, all matters usually associated with resource development and improved standards of living.

Another function of the schools is manpower training. Workers must be found for new industry. Important and obvious differences between a traditional, rural work force and a modern industrial one are easy to observe. Large amounts of money are invested on technical training provided by vocational schools and higher institutions. The process usually followed is to develop manpower projections based upon economic development plans. Then, these projections are translated into manpower needs, to be filled by training schools with fairly long-term operating programs. Technical schools, thus, become supply agencies responding to specific demands. As a result, the effort at the second level of education has been to build a system of schools for manpower training that mirrors the industrial system's contribution to economic growth.

The third function which the schools perform is to develop a professional class. This class is so designated by virtue of its high educational attainment. Its responsibility is to discharge a wide variety of administrative, managerial, and service functions. This association between development and the existence of a professional class establishes yet another educational imperative: to identify, train, and install in power a native professional class as replacements for colonial administrators, doctors, teachers, planners, counselors, and lawyers. This imperative usually has meant the dramatic enlargement of existing higher education institutions and the establishment of new ones.

The pattern, then, which has evolved is that education, or, more properly, *formal schooling*, systematically becomes the handmaiden of development.

Education becomes the means through which one achieves material and status rewards; it is the primary means by which upward mobility is possible. Schooling has become so closely identified with our social reward system and so pervasive, schooling has become an unquestioned socially and economically valuable commodity. It is the ticket to advancement and the essential part of the good life.

That, at least, is the theory. And it does work for a few, for those who survive the system. But for the masses, they do not always survive. This raises a major question of what is wrong with this conception of development and its education correlates.

Problems in Schooling for Economic Growth

One of the first problems in designing schooling for economic growth is the distribution of educational benefits. In spite of major financial commitments to education, schooling is not the norm for vast numbers of school age youth in developing countries. In fact, it is not uncommon for more school age youth to be outside school than in.

A second problem is the wastage which occurs when a student must repeat a grade or when students drop out of school completely. A universal feature of schooling is that it is sequential in nature over a long duration. This has arisen because of the conceptualization of education as an elite-producing process which takes a considerable period of time before a payoff is reached. The lower steps of the educational ladder have little value in and of themselves. Their value lies, rather, in their status as preliminary steps in the long education process. Loss within the system, due either to repetition of steps or dropping out, is a total loss both in terms of investment of student time and investment of educational resources.

The educated unemployed is a third problem. We have operated under the assumption that the presence of trained manpower is a prior requirement of economic growth. In other words, if trained people are available, the economic system will expand to accomodate them. They may even, through

the use of their skills, cause the system to expand. It now appears, however, that there are severe limits beyond which available manpower can stimulate growth. When a certain point is reached, people simply can not find jobs.

A fourth problem, closely related to the others, is allocation of resources. Schools are expensive institutions to operate, even those which are minimal and poor in quality. Cost pressures have produced dramatic increases in educational expenditures, both in proportion to GNP spent on education and in the educational share of public budgets. As a percentage of GNP, educational costs already exceed six percent in many countries; as a percentage of public budget, many nations are reaching the 25 percent level. It is clear that the limits of possible spending for education are or already have been reached in many nations of the world.

In summary, there is strong evidence that the educational programs which we have evolved to fit the model of development through an expanding economy simply are not working efficiently or effectively. Education simply is not getting at problems of reaching people when and where they need it. Education is costly. It produces often unneeded elites. And it increasingly seems unrelated to a more comprehensive view of development.

Expanded Conceptions of Development

Rather than replacing older ones, newer conceptions of development expand and refine, introduce new dimensions, and reorder priorities. In these new conceptions, productivity, capital formation, and other goals and ideals of conventional development remain central to planning and implementation. What is at issue is not rejection of existing elements but the placement of them in a more comprehensive network of goals and ideals.

In general, the expanded conception of development may be described as a heightened attention to the *humane*, as opposed to the *technical* dimensions of development. This means a renewed effort to improve what is

commonly called the "quality of life" for the masses. This emphasis redefines development as being the selective attack on the worst forms of poverty and other forms of human suffering. Development goals now are expressed in terms of the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, squalor, unemployment, and inequality. A number of these concerns were simply left out of the economic growth model; it was assumed that if growth took place, these problems would be solved or at least ameliorated.

Education Correlates of Expanded Conceptions of Development

An assessment of the current development situation provides a rather solid basis for describing the kind of education required to meet new demands:

- Education must have a clear base in human need, whether economic, political, social, health, or nutrition.
- Education must be concerned with equity. There must be a high potential for equal distribution of whatever rewards are associated with educational outcomes. Examples are economic gain, improved health, and better nutrition.
- Education must be linked directly to real employment opportunities, especially those involving labor-intensive agriculture and industry.
- Education, if it is to reach the masses, must have a low per capita and per instructional unit cost.
- Education must be of limited duration, with frequent completion points at which students may terminate.
- Education must begin in a recognition of the aspirations of the learners. It must be responsive to those aspirations, and programs should be planned on the basis of them.

The Structure of Non-Formal Education

Something about the structure of non-formal education can be learned by reflecting on how people have always learned, even when there were no schools. Education is as old as man's capacity to learn, but schools as we know them are relatively new. In preliterate societies, the young learned what they needed to know by first observing, then taking part in simpler tasks, and finally by participating in complex tasks. They were then prepared to train others; the learning cycle was complete.

Today, even in our complex and specialized world, one can see this structure in out-of-school learning. First, there is the close proximity between learning and action, between meaningful work and use. Second, the learning takes place within the activities and values of everyday existence. Third, out-of-school education usually focuses on the learner in his or her environment: in the shop, factory, or farm. Fourth, the rewards of learning are usually real, rather than symbolic, as well as normally immediate rather than deferred. Finally, this kind of learning re-defines the role of the teacher. In formal schools, teachers are professionals and are certified in some way. In out-of-school education, the teachers frequently are those who, through work experience, have mastered the skills they teach.

A Comparison of Formal and Non-formal Education

There is a great range and variety of forms of educational experience available to development planners, as suggested by a comparison of some of the essential characteristics of some of the basic education correlates:

1. Structure -- Formal school programs are highly structured in a coordinated and sequential system. Non-formal programs usually have much less centralization and common structure; they might be better described as a subsector than as a system.

2. Content -- Formal education generally is academic, abstract, and

verbal. Non-formal education normally is task or skill-centered, with objectives which relate to practical application in everyday situations.

3. Time -- Formal education is future-time oriented; non-formal education is short-term or present-time oriented.

4. Rewards -- In formal education, payoffs tend to be deferred and are long-range. In non-formal education, the payoffs tend to be tangible and either immediate- or short-term.

5. Locale -- Formal education is highly visible and fixed in place. Non-formal education usually has low visibility and may occur in almost any location, including on-the-job.

6. Method -- Formal education transmits standardized knowledge from teacher to student in the classroom. Non-formal education tends to be more content specific, with the instructional efforts directed at application.

7. Participants -- Formal school students usually are age-defined and reasonably predictable. Teachers are formally certified. Non-formal education students may be from all age groups, and teachers have a great variety of qualifications which are not necessarily formally certified. In terms of social approval, students who reject or "fail" in formal schools may suffer social stigma; non-formal education participants may reject or "fail" with little or no social stigma.

8. Function -- Formal education experiences generally are designed to meet needs that people are assumed to have. Non-formal education more frequently is designed in response to needs people say they have.

Toward an Expanded View of Educational Resources

Formal and non-formal education are two very different modes of education, each arising in very different conceptions of development. Just as the conception of development must be expanded, so too must the conception of education for development. Schooling and education must be separated for purposes of educational planning; the two no longer can be equated. We must learn how to use educational resources beyond the school, weaving together all the resources of education into a true system of education. Thus, the work of future education planners must transcend the single medium, schools, and mobilize all available educational resources. The unique capacities of each resource must be fully used in order to accomplish the particular development task at hand.

Implications for Policy and Programs

In the new and expanded conceptions of education and development, there are several implications for educational policy and programs. These are apparent in efforts now underway in many developing countries to reshape those institutions which hold some promise for meeting basic human needs. Contributions in the area of education can best be focused, I believe, where new perceptions of education are being born and new arrangements for its delivery are seriously under consideration.

I see four such opportunities. The first occurs wherever governments are attempting to develop comprehensive, nation-wide learning systems, using all educational resources, both formal and non-formal. A second opportunity is to be found where formal educational institutions are earnestly trying to extend their services to populations previously untouched by education. This particular effort frequently calls for some very major reordering of educational values and practices. The third opportunity centers on agencies which, themselves, are operating non-formal education programs. Their numbers are large and their work significant; their efforts warrant support. The fourth opportunity relates to research on the critical issues of

non-formal education policy and practice. Years of research have gone into the shaping of formal education. On the other hand, research history on non-formal education is all too brief and inadequate to give much guidance. Investments now in non-formal education research are urgently needed.

Converting Opportunity to Action

There are many ramifications of these opportunities, along with some immediate ways to take action:

1. Creating comprehensive national policies on education. Given a new interpretation of development needs, an important next step becomes one of learning how to mobilize and utilize all learning resources, both formal and non-formal. This need to view educational development planning problems as part of a total national learning system is a matter of some urgency. The formulation of new educational policies and strategies which are appropriate to new objectives requires the utilization of all educational resources in order to produce the desired outcomes. The need is not to abandon the formal system and replace it with a non-formal structure, but to allocate educational resources in a more comprehensive way.

2. Combining formal and non-formal education. There is a good basis for believing that some formal educational institutions can perform very effectively in non-formal education. Further, in terms of learners, a sharp distinction between school and non-school education is dysfunctional. If learning is continuous, it must be continuously available at those times and places, as well as in those quantities and types, which are required. Formal education institutions frequently are in a better position than others to provide such a continuing and unified pattern of educational services.

Another advantage which formal educational institutions have is that they are there, in place. They will probably continue to exist and grow, commanding ever larger shares of national budgets. There are many questions which, therefore, need to be examined: In what ways may these established institutions be transformed into agents of education, instead of only schooling? How can established institutions be prompted to undertake seminal programs in the non-school arena? How can these new programs be designed in such a manner that they have a transforming effect on the schooling establishment itself and on the non-schooling establishment?

3. Working with agencies which sponsor non-formal education programs. In one year, members of the faculty of Michigan State University, for example, spent nearly 800 person-days consulting in ten countries on problems of non-formal education development. These kinds of activities suggest something about the extend of interest in non-formal education. The following are some of the questions to which these faculty consultants address themselves in working cooperatively with their hosts:

   a. What are the non-formal educational resources of the nation and how can they be mobilized and developed to carry a more significant share of the educational load?

   b. How can community learning systems be developed, largely from existing resources, which can help to educate out-of-school populations?

   c. Do new programs under consideration offer the possibility of extending education to populations excluded from formal education?

   d. How well do proposed programs address themselves to problems of basic human needs, particularly in matters of food and nutrition, employment, health, housing, and other basic human needs?

4. Conducting research aimed at strengthening non-formal education programs. Research and field applications are, of course, closely intertwined. The difficult problems which we confront in

our field work have made us keenly aware of the vital relationship in non-formal education development between research and action, between knowledge building and experience. We also have learned something about the necessity for carrying on research and action together.

Simplistically, one might think of generating knowledge first in an intellectual setting like a campus and then taking it to the field for application. Actually, the research phase of our non-formal education program at Michigan State was made possible only because faculty members were involved in field applications. It is in the field that the knotty research problems arise; that is where they need to be studied and investigated. Priority must be given now to research which helps us conceptualize the real world of non-formal education, its condition, and its development needs and future.

Summary

Current interest in non-school education may spring in part from the general failure of school education to fulfill unrealistic development expectations. These expectations have been unrealistic in the sense that few people have looked critically at the developmental capabilities of schools as organizations. Instead, the operating assumption too often seems to have been that *more* schooling is an improvement over *less* and that the capacity of schools to contribute to developmental goals is almost unlimited. The assumption, for the most part, has gone unexamined. Current disillusionment with school education may be as much a failure of judgment on the part of developers as on the part of schools themselves.

The same error in judgment just as easily could be made now in the flush of enthusiasm for non-school, or non-formal, education. It, too, could be assumed to have magical properties which, in fact, don't exist;

the future of non-formal education just as easily could be filled with second thoughts. Presently, many feel that school education has fallen short. The task, therefore, often is seen as developing non-school education.

A more fundamental need, however, is to recognize that both school and non-school, formal and non-formal, education have built-in structural elements which condition their capabilities to contribute in defined ways to development. Thus, the fundamental task seems to be to analyze more precisely the structural properties of each form of education in order to determine the potential of each for contributing to particular kinds of development and for building programs which utilize all their strengths within a more unified and coherent policy of educational development. Pursuing this activity has the real potential of yielding better development payoffs from both formal and non-formal education investments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cole S. Brembeck is Associate Dean and Director of the Institute for International Studies in Education, College of Education, Michigan State University. He was the first Director of MSU's Program of Studies in Non-Formal Education and in this capacity helped to organize two international conferences on the subject. He is the author of New Strategies for Educational Development: The Cross-Cultural Search for Non-Formal Alternatives (1975) and numerous papers, including "Agenda Items for New Initiatives in Non-Formal Education", "Formal and Non-Formal Education: Inter-Faces in Development," "Equal Educational Opportunity: Denial From Within", "Can Schools Educate Both Inside and Out?", and "Out-of-School Youth: What is the Problem?".

Professor Brembeck has served as consultant to the World Bank, UNESCO, the Agency for International Development, the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, and the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization.

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